

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strategic Plan for the City of Summerside's Community Services Department is documented in two reports: (1) a Technical Background Report and (2) the Strategic Plan. The Plan included three phases including a needs assessment, development of the strategic framework and the strategic plan. The Technical Background Report comprises the work completed in the needs assessment.

Needs Assessment

Population and socio-demographic indicators indicate: the City's population is stable, has experienced limited in-migration, English is the predominant language, and few residents classify themselves as either visible minority or aboriginal. The population is aging, which simply means that there are increasingly fewer young people and more older-adults. There is a higher percent of single parent families than in the Province as a whole. Each factor has implications for activities of interest and affordability of activities.

Influential **leisure trends** considered in development of the Strategy included:

- Reduction of barriers (financial, physical, social) to participation in community recreation;
- Increased attention to healthy living and reduction of social factors creating illness;
- Changes in the nature of programming for older adults to reflect changing needs and resources;
- Partnerships for service delivery.

The City's Economic and Culture Department, the Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, Generation XX, and a large number of community sport and recreation groups provide **leisure services** independently and in partnership with the Community Services Department (CSD). Together these services provide excellent leisure opportunities.

While the Credit Union Place is the focus of the CSD's services, abundant parks, trails, and sports fields and courts are well distributed throughout the City. A significant waterfront trail, with a number of north south connectors, provides opportunities for walking, biking, roller blading etc., throughout Summerside.

Consultation activities included key informant interviews; focus groups; a public meeting; meeting and survey with stakeholder groups; and an online comment form for residents.

Predominant themes included:

- The importance of fiscal sustainability;
- The need to be sensitive to costs of programs and facilities to encourage broad participation;
- Staff resource issues related to management of the CUP and other municipal leisure services;
- Department role in program delivery;
- Support to volunteers and volunteer organizations;
- Communication;
- Leadership and outreach;
- Pursuit of partnerships for service delivery;
- Department role relative to management of major events designed to attract visitors and tourists.

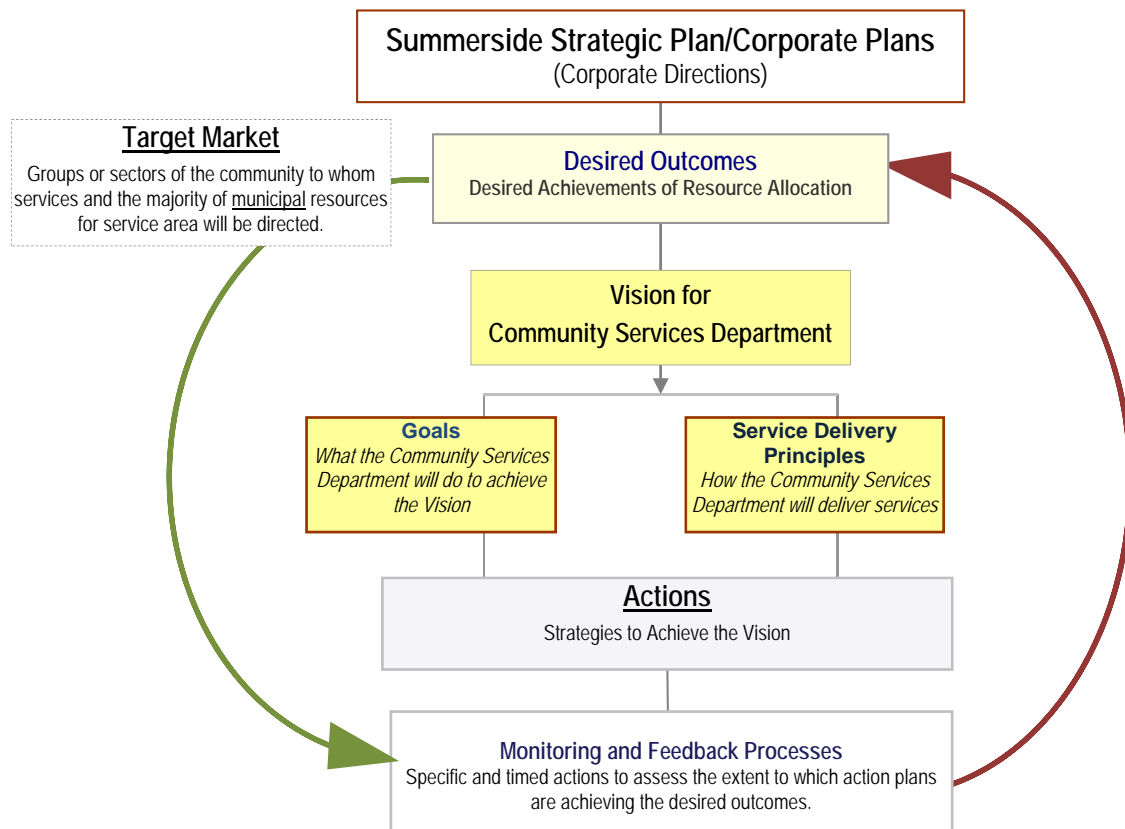
In **summary**, the needs assessment indicated:

- There is limited need for additional indoor or outdoor recreation. Facility needs identified (e.g., multi-purpose program space, skateboard park) are currently being addressed.
- Parks and trails are well supplied and distributed. There may be more small parks than is either needed or efficient.
- There are opportunities to develop program partnerships with a number of complementary agencies in the City.
- The need for more, and more effective communication with patrons, the community and stakeholder groups was noted.
- Staff complement in the context of operation of recreation services and major events are a concern.

Service Delivery Framework

A Service Delivery Framework guides the actions of the Strategy. The Framework includes a vision statement, service delivery principles, and service goals. The framework was developed through a facilitated workshop that followed the completion of the needs assessment. That workshop also identified (1) the target market or the primary recipients of the organization's services and (2) outcomes, the intended consequences or results of goals achieved. Figure 1 illustrates the relationships of the various elements of the Framework.

Figure 3.1 Service Delivery Framework



Target Market

The active recreation and sport needs and interests of Summerside residents, inclusive of all ages, abilities or financial capacity, is the primary target market of the Community Services Department

Vision Statement

All residents of Summerside enjoy and receive the broad benefits of recreation, in facilities and open spaces that are interesting and energizing; inviting and safe; and financially and environmentally sustainable. Through these opportunities Summerside's residents engage in the life of their community and contribute to its wellbeing

Outcomes

1. Residents of Summerside engage in active and healthy lifestyles contributing to overall health and quality of life.
2. Residents of Summerside experience opportunity for personal growth and development (e.g. building character, self-esteem and confidence).
3. Residents of Summerside are engaged in the activities of their community contributing to a socially integrated and cohesive community.
4. Volunteer community organizations and leaders are strong and sustainable.
5. Residents of Summerside have a positive sense of the natural environment and the importance of its sustainability.
6. The parks and recreation system in Summerside contributes to a sustainable environment for residents and businesses.
7. Visitors and Tourists are attracted to and welcomed to Summerside helping to sustain the local economy.

Service Delivery Principles

1. Department services incorporate practices that ensure financial and environmental sustainability.
2. Department recreation and park services are inclusive, ensuring that all residents regardless of age, ability or financial means have opportunities to engage in healthy, active leisure experiences.
3. Department services incorporate ongoing effective and informative communication.
4. Department services will be delivered through viable partnerships with community agencies, businesses and volunteer organizations, whenever appropriate.
5. Department decisions and activities reflect carefully and skillfully planned policies, processes and service plans.
6. Department services are provided by staff and volunteers who understand the benefits of recreation and who are skilled in developing opportunities to deliver these benefits.

Goals

1. Provide all city residents the opportunity to experience benefits of active and healthy recreation.
2. Develop and maintain strong partnerships that support service delivery, community engagement, and accessibility.
3. Maintain infrastructure and open spaces for the enjoyment of the City's residents and visitors.
4. Create innovative and sustainable financial capacity for Department services.
5. Promote and communicate opportunities for active and inclusive engagement in healthy active recreation.
6. Maintain and attract qualified staff to deliver quality programs and customer service.
7. Ensure a high level of commitment to policies and plans.

Actions

Actions to achieve each goal were developed. These actions are not all the things that the CSD will do over the next five years. Rather they are initiatives that address the shortfalls or challenges that are in the way of the Department achieving its stated vision.

The City and the CSD provide an excellent supply of parks, recreation and event opportunities and this Strategy includes little in the way of additional infrastructure requirements. What appears to be most needed are actions that will assist the Department to maintain and manage current services in a sustainable manner. There are 30 actions identified in the Strategy. Some are noted as being of high priority – to be completed within the next year or two and the remaining to be completed by the end of the Strategic Plans planning horizon in 2017.

Provide all city residents the opportunity to experience benefits of active and healthy recreation.

- A-1: Communicate all the opportunities in the City to participate in low and no-cost leisure time activities and the benefits of this participation through press release, program brochure and a specifically focused brochure.
- A-2: Develop capacity within the CSD for volunteer and community development support. Develop processes including job descriptions, and associated policies, for this support and communicate its availability.
- A-3: Work with partner agencies, other City Departments and staff to develop a fee assistance policy and process to support access to programs by persons with low-income, including those whose income reflects a disability with implications for income level.
- A-4: Develop policy to support access to facilities and programs by those with disabilities, to reflect but not be limited to: no-cost support for a helper or care giver to assist the patron; integrated programs provided by the City, special programs provided by agencies who work with persons with disability; broad communication of these opportunities.

- A-5: Work with partner agencies, including area schools to expand use of the CUP, other City facilities, and schools.
- A-6: Work with existing participants of municipal programs, and with partners as appropriate, to identify barriers to participation other than ability to pay and consider how these might be addressed.

Develop and maintain strong partnerships that support service delivery, community engagement and accessibility.

- B-1: Establish a committee of agency and organizational service providers in the City who address the recreational, health and social needs of residents of all ages, for the purpose of identifying program and social needs, providing a multi-provider approach to service provision, and advising the City on policy directions that support access to recreation.
- B-2: Initiate discussion with Schools in Summerside to identify mutually beneficial opportunities for children and the community to better utilize the facilities of each organization with respect to active healthy recreation.
- B-3: Establish a biannual meeting with community sport groups to discuss issues of mutual concern and the ways these may be managed to the City and organizations' mutual benefit.
- B-4: Review facility allocation policies and procedures to ensure they outline the City's objectives related to inclusion, benefits and accessibility and share these policies and processes with community sport and recreation groups who utilize municipal sport and recreation infrastructure.

Maintain infrastructure and open spaces for the enjoyment of the City's residents and visitors.

- C-1: Each operational sector (e.g., pool, fitness, arena, parks, trails) should establish processes to regularly review maintenance issues - internally and with patrons - to identify realistic maintenance deficiencies. Deficiencies should be identified as: (1) requires different staff procedures (2) requires consistent staff training (3) required different/new instructions to patrons (4) reflects staff complement or distribution issues. New procedures to address issues that fall into 1, 2 and or 3 should be implemented immediately.
- C-2: If a significant number of maintenance challenges do not reflect easily managed responses of training, new procedures for staff and/or patrons the CSD should undertake a workload assessment to confirm requirements and options to expand maintenance resources.

Create innovative and sustainable financial capacity for Department Services.

- D-1: Adopt a cost-centre budget process to track costs and revenues for events, entertainment and each major service area (e.g., aquatics, sport fields, event arena, community arena etc.) in the CSD.
- D-2: Identify and develop membership and program sponsorship opportunities that expand use of the CUP, with a focus on expanded use and membership during non-prime hours.
- D-3: Using cost-centre expense tracking by unit of use, (e.g., hour, half day etc.), compare actual costs to unit rental charges, and use this information to establish fees and charges to specific users.
- D-4: Prepare marketing and promotional material for use in budget presentations, facility rentals etc., so that facility renters understand the basis for charges and, where appropriate, groups and the community, understand where tax subsidies are given and why.
- D-5: Develop a policy to support tax subsidy for services that contribute to the goals of this Plan, and full cost recovery for facility use that does not connect directly to goals. Further, differentiate between volunteer groups and for-profit providers.
- D-6: Develop service partnerships with the Boys & Girls Club, the YMCA, and others in the community who can enhance program services to the community while minimizing the need to add staff to the CSD for program services.

Promote and communicate opportunities for active and inclusive engagement in healthy active recreation.

- E-1: Develop appropriate media and messages to promote and communicate the directions of this Strategic Plan.
- E-2: Develop a website presence for recreation services that engages the site visitor, promotes the benefits of recreation and opportunities for participation. Ensure that the site is interactive with opportunities to receive information and provide input through social media such as Facebook and Twitter.
- E-3: Enhance communication to residents and specifically users of the CUP related to upcoming events, closures etc.
- E-4: Develop and communicate opportunities for community engagement related to development of new infrastructure, changes to existing infrastructure and services.

Ensure a high level of staff and Council commitment to policies and plans.

- F-1: Identify all Department Plans that may include policy directions (e.g., the Recreation and Green Plan) and assess the degree to which these plans and associated policies remain relevant in the context of the 2012 CSD Strategic Plan.
- F-2: Ensure that the following policies are in place (developed, updated and/or documented): fee assistance; facility allocation; land acquisition, and park hierarchy; joint use agreements with schools or other service providers; grants to groups, and support to volunteer organizations.

Maintain and attract qualified staff to deliver quality programs and customer services.

- G-1: Use the actions included in the section on financial sustainability, specifically R4-1, 3, 4 and 5, to assess the financial and staff implications of retaining the entertainment function within the CSD.
- G-2: Adopt a method of tracking staff workload relative to specific aspects of staff job descriptions as a prelude to a Department Operational Review.
- G-3: Review current job descriptions and identify aspects of current job descriptions that reflect the goals of the Strategic Plan, those that are inconsistent with these goals, and where goals are not reflected in current job descriptions.
- G-4: Undertake a Department Operation Review to assess staff complement, skill sets and experience to match staff resources to the requirements of this Strategy.
- G-5: In the context of a full operational review, assess the need for a General Manager to operate the CUP.

Implementation

Table 1 outlines staff time and costs associated with the Actions of the Strategy. Costs are noted as “staff time” or actual dollar costs. Staff time is specified as CSD Staff (CSDS) or other City Staff (OCS).

The City of Summerside is not necessarily responsible for all costs. Some costs may be supported through grants from other levels of government or other agencies, community fund-raising, partner contributions, sponsorships and donations, among other means.

Financial Implications

High priority actions *to be completed in the next one to two years* have “green” dollar values of actions total \$45,000 to \$70,000 depending on scope of operational review and cost of website development. Actions *to be completed in the following two to three years* carry a “dollar” value of approximately \$10,000. All actions requiring additional funding will be brought forward during the annual budget process for consideration.

The most significant action (with respect to dollar value and implications for achieving the Strategy’s goals) is the operational review. Until that review is completed and reallocation of staff resources, acquisition of required skill sets, and availability of additional staff resources are in place, it may be difficult to achieve many of the other high priority actions.

Monitoring the Strategy

Reviewing and noting that the actions have been completed, and measures used to demonstrate performance should be done annually. Staff should communicate where additional or existing actions contribute to these goals and to provide solid and measurable evidence of these achievements.

Updating the Strategy

Strategic plans are designed for a specific period. The Strategy incorporates a vision of a planned future and goals to manage immediate situations that are in the way of that planned future. It would be unusual if five years from now the future vision changed completely. More probably, the vision will stay the same, some of the most problematic challenges to achieving the vision will have been addressed and the next Plan will establish new goals to address the challenges of the day.